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To: IBS - Casler
IPS - Mann
IMS - Clarke
ITS - Wheeler

From: IOP - Joseph Polakoff

News Policy Note 0720-1900

Captive Nations Week

Summary: Congress on July 9 adopted a Joint Resolution (S.J.Res. 111) requesting the President to proclaim the third week of July as "Captive Nations Week". A Presidential proclamation was issued on July 17. The Joint Resolution and the Presidential Proclamation demonstrate once more the continuing concern and interest of the United States Government and people in the peoples of Soviet-dominated countries who have been forcibly deprived of their freedom and independence by aggressive Soviet imperialism.

Treatment: 1. As orally recommended previously, we ought to give routine coverage to all areas, including the orbit areas, to the activities and ceremonies in connection with "Captive Nations Week."

2. We ought to emphasize as opportunities arise, that both the Joint Resolution and the President Proclamation demonstrate once again the continuing concern and interest of the US Government as well as the people of the United States in the fate of the people in Soviet-dominated countries who have been forcibly deprived of their freedom and independence by aggressive Soviet imperialism.

3. Your attention is invited to the cautions indicated in paragraphs 3 and 4 below.

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BACKGROUND: The following was contained in a memorandum received by IOP from the Department of State:

1. The intent of Congress, as expressed in the resolution and by its sponsors, is to emphasize the continuing concern of this country in the fate of peoples under Soviet domination. It is considered important that the people of the United States clearly manifest that they share with people of the subjugated countries their aspirations for their freedom and independence, and that they consider the imperialistic and aggressive policies of Soviet communism pose a dangerous threat to the security of the United States.

2. The US Government, as indicated in the Presidential proclamation, supports in principle the general intent expressed in the joint resolution which is in accordance with its policy of encouraging by peaceful means an evolution toward national freedom and independence in the Soviet-dominated countries, and of assuring the people of these countries of the continuing American interest in their situation and their aspirations.

3. However,

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3. However, the joint resolution lists by specific names not only countries usually identified as captive nations, but also Communist-controlled parts of certain divided countries (East Germany, mainland China, North Korea, North Vietnam) and certain constituent parts of USSR (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Ukraine, Cossackia, Turkestan, etc.). It is not the policy of the United States to espouse and seek to promote the independence of the constituent parts of the USSR indicated above. Also, it is felt that in the case of the divided countries the basic problem for the inhabitants of the Communist-dominated part is not to obtain national independence but rather to reunite with the free part so that the country as a whole may exercise full national independence. Therefore, the proclamation substitutes the general term "Soviet-dominated nations" for the list of names of countries.

4. The timing and content of the resolution as well as the issuance of the proclamation may introduce a discordant note for the Vice President in his forthcoming visit to the Soviet Union and for the Secretary in his current negotiations in Geneva. The Soviets may focus on it as a propaganda target.

5. Nevertheless, this action of the United States will provide encouragement to the just aspirations of Soviet-dominated peoples and provide a lift for the morale of emigre leaders.

6. In observance of Captive Nations Week, the Acting Secretary has been requested to receive a delegation from ACEN (Assembly of Captive European Nations) who wish to call and pay their respects on the occasion. The nine ACEN countries are those this Government has consistently identified as captive nations. (These countries are Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Rumania, Bulgaria, Albania, Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia).

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